



LAURAGAIS TOURISME

TOURIST OFFICE

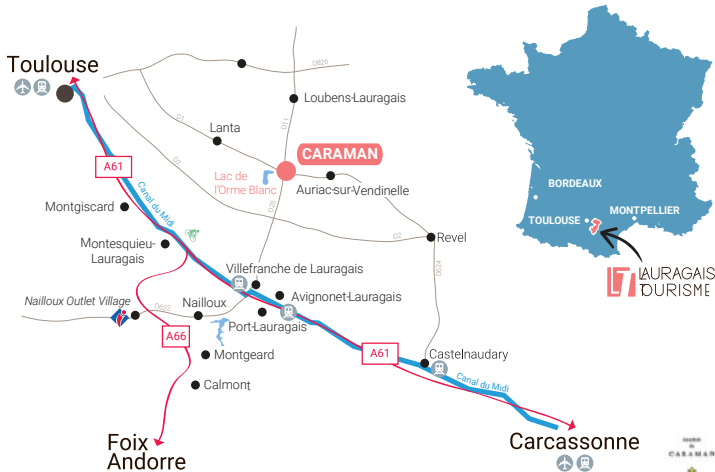
NaillouxOutletVillage
Unité 82 · 31560 NAILLOUX
accueil@lauragaistourisme.fr
www.lauragais-tourisme.fr
+33 0(5) 62 57 09 68

@LauragaisTourisme31 #Lauragaisourisme



CARAMAN

At the edge of the Lauragais



Ne pas jeter sur la voie publique.

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■ In the footsteps of a prehistorian occupant



The curiosity and passion of the amateur archeologists of the local association the "Guardians of the roots" enabled to update the presence of mysterious mammal, called anthracotere, during archaeological digs on the hills of Prat Mau, outside Caraman.

This species, half-pig, half-hippopotamus, lived here more than 28 million years ago in an environment totally different from ours, due to an almost tropical climate and a flourishing vegetation !

■ A medieval past

This village that was once called « Carmaing » is mentioned in texts from the beginning of the XIth century. Same as the whole of Lauragais, this lordship was then dominated by the counts of Laurac who owed their huge wealth to the salt business. Salt was very valuable at the time, because it allowed to preserve food.

The town of Carmaing was built around a castle (destroyed at parts in 1622), located on the highest part of the village center.

In 1206, the town, acquired to the Cathar cause, welcomed Saint-Dominique for 8 days. The latter came to discuss with the several heretics to try to bring them back into Catholic faith, but in vain. In 1217, the lord of Carmaing even took up weapons at the side of the count of Toulouse to fight against Simon de Montfort, the leader of the crusade !

A bit later, the lordship of Caraman was bought back by the count of Toulouse and went into the hands of different powers including Jeanne de Foix at the end of the XVIth century.

■ The Wars of Religion

The county of Caraman was created in 1484. Its economy was based on the cereal cultivation, farming, vineyard and of course, wood trade. During the XVIth century, a part of the county was won by the ideas of the Protestant reform. In 1570, the village was stormed by the troops of the admiral Coligny who passed with the edge of the sword all its inhabitants and burnt down all the houses. That's why began a civil war and trouble period that devastated the Lauragais. Caraman was sometimes in between the hands of the Protestants, sometimes between those of the Catholics, which led to a lot of misfortune and destruction.

■ Caraman at the times of the Riquet

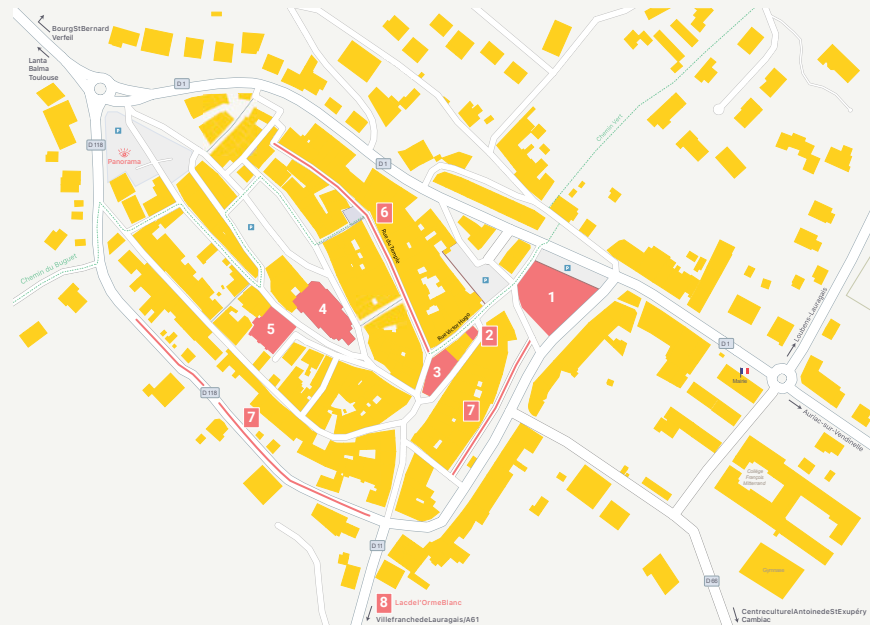
The county was sold in 1670 to the creator of the Canal du Midi, Pierre-Paul Riquet and stayed in this family until the French Revolution. At the time, the county gathered 16 conurbation authority (like Loubens, Albiac, Caragoudes...) and 6000 inhabitants.



A full of life and colorful
Every Thursday morning took place one of the most enjoyable markets of the Lauragais in the village center. The ideal place to discover delicious local and homemade specialities.



A rich cultural and associative life
Thanks to a nice program, the cultural center Antoine de Saint-Exupéry welcomes shows and renowned artists all year long. The manga culture is well represented with the annual exhibition Caramanga in spring.
For the stroll lovers, the association Caraman Randonnée Loisirs is an unmissable in the area!

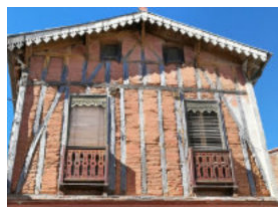


1 The Ravelin square

The Ravelin is work of fortification made up of 2 faces shaping a prominent angle et used to secure the access to an important square. The aime of the ravelin was to defend the « Porte de l'aigle », one of the three fortified gates that gave access to the town.

Caraman's fortification system was made of defensive walls and ditches that circled the castle and the peopling's area that developed all around. This whole was called the « castrum ».

2 The Roucariès Half-timbered House



This elegant house from the XVth century is a good example of « corron dage » (regional designation of colombage's houses, meaning corbelled house).

At the time, it was facing the Aigle's door.

3 The market hall

The presence of a market in Caraman is testified since the year 1000. The market hall was set up here because it's situated at the crossing point between the two former fortified gates. In 1864, the market hall was rebuilt.



4 The Saint-Peter Church

This church is a modern building: it has been entirely rebuilt in the very beginning of the XXth century.

Two edifices located in the same place precede it : one was destroyed during the vandalization of the town by the Protestants in 1570, the other was highly damaged during the French Revolution. At the time, the tower bell and the lateral chapels were demolished.

It's only in 1866 that the local council voted the construction of a new bell tower. But the edifice was fragile. At the end of the XIXth century, it was already showing signs of weakness. The current bell tower is the highest peak of the Lauragais (47m high). Inside the church, admire the Notre-Dame la Belle statue

dating back to the middle of the XVth century, as well as the pretty stone and marble altar realised by the Giscard workshop in Toulouse in the XIXth century.



5 The Malbos mansion house

This private house dates back to the XVth century. Dominique de Bonay bought it but at that time, it was just ruins, following the passage of the Protestants. He had this beautiful mansion built, that was reworked over the centuries. This house has the particularity of being transmitted from aunt to nephew. It' is today in the same family since the XVth century

6 La rue du Temple

Admire in the street the beautiful corbelled houses.

Near the large staircase, you can see the former temple. The protestants would reign without sharing from 1570 until the 30th of June 1622, date when the town was took back by the Catholics. When they became masters of the city, the Protestants, destroyed the church and built a temple. It was used until 1642.



7 The town's fortifications

The town's previous ditches, nowadays occupied by the boulevards, used to be dominated by the round path, also called « lices ».

At this place were organised the defense of the city from the XVth century. Jousts, tournaments, and livestock fairs took place by in peace time.



8 The Orme Blanc's lake

This 5 hectare lake located at only 1.5km away from the village, is truly a haven of peace ! It is possible to go by car or by walk by taking a part of the « Le castrum de Caraman's » hiking path.

The strollers enjoy this walk around the lake (1.5 km), swimming lovers can make the most with a nice beach (open in July and August, have to pay to get access to it).

